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the Therapeutic law of Homeopathy and the

debts of systems and theories, and hypothetical assump-  
tions. Respectfully Submitted to the Faculty  
of the Homoeopathic Medical College  
of Pennsylvania for the promotion

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In tracing the history of medicine from its earliest periods down to the present time, we behold strewn along the whole path-way of medical science, innumerable wrecks of exploded theories and superannuated systems. Amid the ruins of this stupendous mass of heterogeneous elements, one to be found the debris of systems and theories, and hypothetical assumptions, whose founders and supporters, were men distinguished for their eminent scientific and literary attainments - men whose labours for the promotion of science were indefatigable; and whose genius shall ever shine forth as a bright constellation in the firmament of medical science. Notwithstanding this great array of genius and talents, each of these systems and theories was reared to flourish and be admired for a time, only to be overthrown and superseded by others, which, in their turn, were doomed to a similar fate. Now where are we to look for the grand cause of all this? It is to be found solely in the fact that, in the first place, the foundations upon which these theories and therapeutic



indications were based, were hypothetical and conjectural. Certain conditions were assumed, and certain states of the system supposed to exist: without any plausible grounds for such assumptions or suppositions. Instead of bringing facts to bear, facts susceptible of demonstration: and raising thus their theories on a solid foundation: each writer has given himself to subtle and abstruse reasonings, taking for his data conjectural agencies and false positions in relation to the structures and functions of the animal economy.

Having thus drawn their therapeutic indications from false premises, the application of their remedies to the cure of diseased conditions was necessarily attended with like conjectural and uncertain results.

Adopting as the basis of their medical faith and practice, the principle "*contraria contrariis curantur*"; diseases were accordingly arranged under certain classes and orders, their remedial agents they grouped into corresponding classes. Thus associating the cure of certain diseases with certain groups of remedies, or rather the names of certain diseases with certain remedies—



For when the Physician was called to prescribe for any malady, he first sought to name the disease, according to certain previously established rules of nosological nomenclature. This being accomplished, a certain class or group of remedies was brought to bear on the unfortunate victim, in successive order; which, when exhausted, and the patient no better, or still alive; they were obliged to commence again, at the beginning of the catalogue, and go through the same routine.

Others, again, appeared on the stage, and without adding themselves to any particular theory, made what they conceived to be, judicious selections from the doctrines of their predecessors: thus instituting another, and somewhat different mode of practice; yet retaining in the main the old classifications.

Thus we find a constant series of revolutions taking place, in both the theory and practice of medicine until the immortal Hamunams appeared in the arena of medicine, <sup>science</sup> and promulgated to the world, the grand proposition "Similia Similibus curantur".

Here was a fundamental law upon which to—



Construct a system of therapeutics - a system which could not be overthrown by the ever vacillating opinions of mankind - a truth immutable as the eternal laws of Nature; and coextensive with the Deity himself.

When Hahnemann first announced to the world the discovery of this great specific law of nature, which involves the principle, that the true and only curative power of medicinal substances, resides in the power which they possess, of inducing a similar train of morbid changes or phenomena in the healthy organism to those which they are known to cure when they occur in disease: it was received as all other great truths that have been vouchsafed to man. The entire universality of the principles involved in this law; and its diametrical opposition to all preconceived opinions, and theories; and its alleged superiority over all other systems when applied to the cure of disease; led Physicians to suppose the new man, and his ideas, the offspring of a disordered imagination. His views were treated with derision and contempt. But still he pursued quietly, and assiduously the investigation



of the new truths that now began to unfold, and develop themselves to his mind. Instituting in his own person, and upon others, numerous experiments, with crude substances, for the purpose of developing their true medicinal properties, and specific curative action; And thus construct, and build up a Materia Medica on a permanent basis.

So soon, however, as Hahnemann had collected from his experiments sufficient facts to enable him to apply them to practice; and the superiority of <sup>his</sup> system over the prevailing dogmatic systems began to be apparent to Allopathic Physicians; (perhaps from the fact that he cured chronic diseases which had hitherto baffled all their skill; or acute maladies in a much shorter period; and in a more mild, safe and agreeable manner; and the interest which now began to be manifested in behalf of his doctrines,) the former ridicule and contempt now gave place to jealousy and strife.

They now began vigorously to persecute him, and the most bitter invectives and base calumnies were hurled against him and his doctrines.



They seemed even to tax their ingenuity, to find epithets, foul enough with which to heap upon him; until finally he was obliged to quit his native place; to pursue the study of his favorite science, with a few devoted disciples, in a foreign country.

Not dismayed however, he still continued to institute experiments, and elicit new truths, and add new facts to those already accumulated; until he amassed by his indefatigable perseverance, the many invaluable truths embodied in his *Materia Medica*; and which shall be handed down to posterity as an enduring monument of his industry.

Hearing that vouchsafed to us this divine law of nature, through the medium of the immaculate — Hahnemann; it becomes our duty to study well its precepts so as to apply it in such a manner as may be attended with the greatest good to mankind.

Hahnemann in his *Organon* has detailed the best method of applying this law to the cure of disease. He describes minutely the manner in which the patient should be examined. And cautions the Physician against



putting the questions to the patient in such a manner that he may suggest the answer; and thereby obtain a false statement of his case. In addition to the patient's narrative, he directs the Physician to make inquiries of his friends, or attendants in the sick-room as to what changes have taken place since his last visit; the condition of his mind, former habits &c. Having obtained a perfect morbid picture of all the patient's sufferings, moral and physical, he is to select his remedy in accordance with the totality of the symptoms.

The advantage to be gained by noting down, with accuracy, the symptoms as narrated by the patient, or his friends; and in their own language, as recommended by Hamemann; is, that the Physician may review them; and, by so doing, keep constantly before his mind, throughout the treatment, the entire morbid picture of the disease.

There is an evident disposition on the part of many Homoeopaths at the present day to <sup>ridicule</sup> and cast discredit on some of the teachings of <sup>our</sup> venerable founders. It is alleged by some, that he treated Symp-



toms in the abstract, without any reference to causes  
or pathological changes. Others assert that he did not  
avail himself of any means of physical diagnosis—  
But let individuals who make such objections, care-  
fully read Hahnemann's own writings; and, particularly  
his Organon; and they will there learn that Hahnemann,  
in the examination of his patients, omitted nothing, that—  
could in any way contribute to make up a full, and-  
complete diagnosis.

Since the discovery of Homeopathy, notwithstan-<sup>ding</sup>  
the violent opposition she has met with at the hands of  
Old School Physicians, and their allies: the many foul  
misrepresentations, and base falsifications, that have been  
recklessly and unscrupulously hurled against her, and  
her venerable discourse; nothing has served so material-  
ly to retard her progress towards perfection as the  
many inherent difficulties with which she has had to  
 contend.

The increasing popularity of the new System of  
medicine, has induced many to fall into her ranks,  
with no other motives <sup>than</sup> those springing from an-



inordinate desire for mercenary gain. Men who have little conception of the great responsibilities they incur by thus <sup>offering</sup> their services to their fellow beings as guardians and protectors of their lives. They know but little of the true principles of Homoeopathy, and care much less, if only they can gratify this invidious and unholy desire for gain.

It is a lamentable fact that Homoeopathy at the present day, has become, in the hands of many practitioners, essentially a routine practice, even worse than that which obtains in Allopathy. For instead of grouping together the symptoms under some specific name, and directing his remedy against the entire group, or name of the malady: the Homoeopath, on the contrary, in many instances takes for his guide, in the selection of a remedy a single isolated symptom. The result therefore, must necessarily prove as futile, in the one case as the other.

And were it possible, that the fundamental law, upon which rests the whole superstructure of our noble science, could in any way be affected by



this system of routine practice. Homeopathy would undoubtedly share the same fate, as the systems which have preceded her.

But, as the law "Similia Similibus" must ever stand unchanged whatever method be pursued or whatever peculiar notions obtain with these professed votaries of our system; with reference to its application to the cure of disease. Yet, whenever this practice obtains, it is not only attended with a pernicious influence in localities where pursued; but is fraught with consequences in the highest degree deleterious to the general welfare of our science. And we may safely assert, that this one thing, has tended more to retard the intellectual improvement of the science of Homeopathy, and her onward progress towards perfection, than all other obstacles combined.

How often do we hear physicians declare that they almost invariably cure certain classes of diseases with certain remedies. Thus one will assert that he cures nearly every case of typhoid fever with Phos. or Bryonia: Another will say that he cures every case of Intermittent



ferre with Ars. or some other remedy. While others again, find Inf. Boracis invariably successful in the treatment of dysentery. Another cures all cases of constipation with Inf. Another invariably prescribes Aconite or Bell., for headache &c. Now, if this be true of what avail is the law Similia Similibus? Do these men in thus prescribing pay any regard to the external manifestations of the disease? Do they take any cognizance of symptoms at all? They certainly do not! If the patient is interrogated at all, it is only so far as to enable the doctor to satisfy himself that the disease is what he (the patient) alleges it to be. And even in some instances he does not take the trouble to do this, but allows ~~the~~ his patient to christen the disease, and then selects his remedy, in accordance therewith, (that is, with the name).

We find others again blindly prescribing Aconite in all cases characterized by the least degree of febrile excitement; or should there be any local difficulty in connection with <sup>this</sup> febrile action, such as gastric disturbance or derangement in some other portion of the alimentary canal; instead of selecting a single remedy which shall accord with the totality of the symptoms; and -



thus combat the disease manifestations on true homeopathic principles; two remedies are administered in alternation, one for each symptom, or set of symptoms. And, at the same time, in all probability, these remedies are antidotal to each other. For in most instances where we find physicians constantly alternating remedies, it is seldom that any attention is paid to their antidotal properties. This alternation of medicaments constitutes another essential feature in the empirical practice which has become so prevalent in our ranks.

Now, we may ask, what is to be gained by the alternate administration of remedies in the treatment of disease? Is it in accordance with the law of similarity, or correspondence? Or, is it admissible at all, in a practice based on strictly-homeopathic principles?

These are questions which should be duly considered by every practitioner, before he gives himself up entirely and unconditionally to this unscientific and empirical method of practice. It is seldom indeed that the physician is called upon, to treat a case of disease, so complicated in its character, as to require the administration of



more than one simple, well selected homeopathic remedy to meet all its indications. In many diseases, and especially in those affecting the noble organs, we often have supervening on the primary affection many morbid sympathetic phenomena, in parts of the system more or less remote from the true seat of the malady; which might lead the more superficial observer, or the inexperienced practitioner to suppose that he had a very formidable and complicated disease to contend with; and hence the necessity for summoning to his aid, forces, which shall attack the enemy at every point, and expel the invader at once from the system. But in this he is often sadly mistaken; for, instead of examining his patient thoroughly, and prescribing a single appropriate specific; he passes over the case superficially, and jumps at a conclusion respecting a remedy, thinking that, by administering two or more specifics, if one should fail to hit the mark, the other will certainly take effect somewhere and produce the desired result. In prescribing thus a single agent, strictly homeopathic in its relations to the disease, always bearing in mind the cause, and the patient's former habits,



And thus combating the malady on scientific principles, these morbid consentient phenomena will disappear with the primary affection on which they depend.

Even where the symptoms of a disease are so multifarious as to render it seemingly impossible to adapt a remedy to the entire group; if the cause and history of the case be correctly known, and a medicament selected which <sup>shall</sup> cover a majority of the most important indications, the entire group will disappear under its action, or be so modified as to come within the range of another specific that may be indicated for the remaining group.

In Hahnemann's Organon we find the following in reference to this mode of practice:

"In no instance is it requisite to employ more than one simple medicinal substance at a time."

Again: "Experiments have been made by some homoeopaths in cases where, imagining that one part of the symptoms of a disease required one remedy, and that another remedy was more suitable to another part, they have given both remedies at the same time, or nearly so; but I earnestly caution all my adherents against such a hazardous practice, which



never will be necessary, though, in some instances, it may appear serviceable."

Hannemann clearly foresaw the error into which his "adherents" were likely to fall from their previously imbibed notions of compounding drugs, or of administering medicaments in combination, or separately, with a view to their topical action on separate and distinct organs or structures of the economy. Also the dangerous consequences such a practice would involve, not only to the safety, and life of the patient; but to the reputation of the practitioner and the system.

It has been urged by some practitioners, that cases sometimes occur, in which the alternate administration of remedies is absolutely called for. Such for instance, as where ~~we~~ we find the patient labouring under some chronic psoric diathesis, or constitutional infirmity; or where an acute malady supervenes on one which is chronic, and already existing in the system. Now when this takes place, which very-seldom occurs, it almost invariably happens that the chronic malady is entirely suspended, or greatly



modified while the acute runs its course. So that we have remaining for the most part, only those symptoms which characterize the acute affection; - which of course are to be our guide in selecting a remedy. And even when the chronic disorder maintains its identity, thus rendering the case more or less complex in its character, there would seem to be no necessity for the employment of more than one specific; as many of the remedies of our Materia Medica possess a range of action sufficiently extended to meet any exigency, if well adapted.

When therefore, the homoeopath prescribes two remedies he must necessarily select those which bear a close analogy in their pathogenesis, if he would practice according to the law of similarity. The first-remedy is of course the specific, as it should meet a majority of the indications; the second an adjuvant, to combat some odd, or out-of-the-way symptom, which he imagines did not come under the jurisdiction of the former. But here again, another obstacle would arise: for, as not unfrequently happens, when we find physicians



alternating remedies, they are given in low potencies, and in frequent successions. And as we are taught by the great law of nature, "Similia"; that the best antidote for the bad effects of any drug which may have <sup>been</sup> injudiciously applied, is that remedy which shall correspond most closely with the pathogenesis of the one to be antidoted. Therefore it is possible that he may have one drug antidoting the other, and the disease left without a remedy.

Now if the Homeopathic law of cure, as it claims to be, is a specific law: such practices must necessarily be excluded as entirely inadmissible in a strictly homeopathic practice, if we would escape the imputation of empiricism. Since the very essence of the specific actions of substances, consists in the peculiar adaptation of any simple Remedial agent, to remove certain corresponding diseased manifestations.